

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 17 October 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE16/079) - Access to mobile phones - Programme 1.5: IMA Onshore Management

Senator McKim, Nick (L&CA) written:

What is the rationale for the new policy under which people who come by boat are not allowed access to mobile phones, while those who arrive by plane are, and those who have had their visas cancelled are?

Answer:

There has been two discreet approaches regarding access to mobile phones for people in Immigration detention. This is not a new policy. Illegal Maritime Arrivals (IMAs) have not been allowed to have mobile phones, while other detention cohorts have. The restriction on IMA access was implemented to address the risk of IMAs passing on sensitive operational information to contacts outside of the detention environment, particularly during the peak boat arrival period.

In addition mobile phones have been used to organise contraband, facilitate escape attempts and coordinate disturbances affecting the good order of detention facilities.